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Wisconsin Homeland Security Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2007

Homeland security training, equipment saving Wisconsin lives

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This March marks four years since I created the Homeland Security Council to coordinate the state's domestic preparedness efforts, advise me on potential threats, and ensure the safety and security of Wisconsin citizens.

Under the leadership of General Wilkening and other members of the council, we have invested millions of dollars into the protection of critical infrastructure like stadiums, water systems and public buildings. We have equipped our police officers, fire fighters, and emergency responders with state of the art equipment and trained them in response and rescue techniques. And we have developed and drilled emergency response plans should disaster strike Wisconsin.

Our efforts have made Wisconsin safer from terrorist attack – and better able to respond to non-terrorist disasters or emergency situations.


In December, I visited the site of the Falk Corporation disaster after a propane explosion rocked the factory and killed three workers. Thankfully, further loss of life was avoided by the quick and coordinated response of emergency personnel from the city, county and the state. Due in large part to a homeland security exercise only months earlier, fire, police and ambulance units responded in unison, hospital staff prepared for a flood of patients, and state and local officials



Governor Jim Doyle and Bob Hitt, CEO of Rexnord Corporation viewed damage caused by the propane explosion at the Falk Corporation that occurred in December. Three workers were killed in the accident. Rexnord is the parent company of the Falk Corporation.

gathered in the city's emergency operations center to coordinate the response.

Complacency is not a characteristic of homeland security and there is always more work to be done. However, Wisconsin's 'all-hazards' approach has saved lives and protected our citizens. ■


Governor Jim Doyle



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Homeland Security Council

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From the Chair

As Homeland Security Advisor for Wisconsin, I have been at many disaster scenes including the Viola and Stoughton area tornadoes, the Cottonwood Wildfire in Adams County and the explosion at the Falk Corporation. Whether the event is caused by natural disasters such as flooding or storms or man-caused such as a chemical spill, I have seen how in a moment's notice, lives can change forever.



Albert H. Wilkening

Maj. Gen. Al Wilkening
Homeland Security Advisor

Since the attacks on September 11, 2001, we have worked hard making sure our first responders are equipped and trained to respond to any emergency or disaster. However, we need to do a better job preparing our citizens.

According to a report issued last fall by the Citizen Corps Program of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, "despite imminent threats such as a pandemic flu outbreak and the ongoing threat of terrorism, and the increased media attention to these issues, personal disaster preparedness among the U.S. population has not sufficiently improved since 2001."

In addition, the report showed less than half of Americans surveyed have a disaster kit and less than a third have a complete family emergency preparedness plan. Surprisingly, this survey was conducted after Hurricane Katrina.

These results are unacceptable. We must encourage citizens to take an active role in personal preparedness. Government can do everything possible to ensure our communities are safe but our citizens need also to take an active role in protecting themselves and their families by being ready for emergencies.

Currently, there are many emergency preparedness courses available through the American Red Cross and the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Training. In addition, the national Ready campaign also provides good information on how citizens can develop their own disaster kit and family emergency plans. Additional safety preparedness information is also available on our website at <http://homelandsecurity.wi.gov>.

As we approach spring storm season in Wisconsin, now is the perfect time to get ready. I encourage all Wisconsin families to put together a disaster kit, develop an emergency plan, and participate in disaster training. These simple steps could keep your family safe. ■

New training to help keep Wisconsin highways safe

Criminals and potential terrorists using our highways to transport weapons, explosives and drugs to and through Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota and New York will find their travels much more difficult following an advanced training for law enforcement held late last year in West Bend.

The comprehensive criminal and terrorist highway interdiction training—called Desert Snow—was sponsored by the Wisconsin State Patrol and the Milwaukee High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area program. To help fund the training program, the State Patrol used asset forfeitures it received from drug arrests.

During Desert Snow training, 88 law enforcement officers from 23 agencies learned to “look beyond the traffic stop” and identify suspicious or deceptive behavior by drivers during roadside interviews that may indicate possible criminal or terrorist activity. Officers also trained on ways to find hidden compartments in vehicles that can be used to conceal weapons, explosives, drugs and contraband.

Desert Snow was started 15-years-ago by former California Highway Patrol Officer Joe David to train his fellow troopers to spot cocaine smugglers. Since then, the program has expanded to include techniques for identifying potential



Law enforcement officers discover ways potential terrorists and criminals conceal weapons, drugs and other contraband in vehicles as part of the Desert Snow training in West Bend.

terrorists and is considered the nation’s premier highway criminal interdiction training program, according to Wisconsin State Patrol Superintendent David Collins.

“Traffic stops are tremendous opportunities to combat potential terrorist or criminal activity,” Collins said. “For instance, a vehicle that is stopped for a burned out headlight or an expired license plate could turn out to secretly contain

large quantities of weapons, explosives, drugs or other illegal materials. With the Desert Snow training, law enforcement officers are now better prepared to protect the public by apprehending terrorists and criminals during routine traffic stops.”

The Wisconsin State Patrol is currently arranging for another Desert Snow training session in West Bend in the fall of 2007. ■

Protecting our schools, children from attack

In February, Green Bay East High School Principal Ed Dorff and Assistant Principal Matt Mineau presented an online school safety seminar that, for the first time, provided a detailed description of how officials at Green Bay East High School prevented a planned attack on their school. The two administrators described how they responded to the threat of a student-planned attack and how existing policies were successful at preventing a violent incident at East High School.

“The things that we’re talking about were not so much reactions as continuations of processes and procedures that had been going on at East,” said Principal Dorff. “A lot of what went right went right because of what had been going on in the district for years.”

The seminar, titled “Safe Schools: Creating Positive School Culture to Reduce the Chance of Terror, *The Green Bay East High School Experience*”, is the third in a series of webcasts that provide school officials and teachers with tips to better protect their schools from violence and terror. Following the violent incidents in Weston High School and the planned attack on Green Bay East, the school

safety series was developed to provide a resource to school officials in a flexible format that met the demanding schedules of teachers, principals and police officers.

Assistant Principal Mineau emphasized the importance of strong communication between the school and the community and stressed the connection between students and teachers and administrators, saying that “the day of the snitch is over; Matt Atkinson saved over 1,400 lives.”

Previous seminars focused on reducing bullying in schools and a team approach to prevention, preparation and response to threats of violence. The seminars are a coordinated effort between the Office of Justice Assistance, Departments of Public Instruction and Health and Family Services and Wisconsin Emergency Management. The presentations provide school administrators, safety officials and police school resource officers with best-practice models for improving school safety. Filmed in Madison, the seminars can be viewed online at any time by visiting the DPI website, <http://media2.wi.gov/dpi/catalog> and clicking on Safe Schools: Creating a Positive School Culture. ■

Consortium is 'public health ready'

One of seven agencies honored in U.S. for preparedness efforts

The Milwaukee/Waukesha County Consortium for Emergency Public Health Preparedness was one of seven groups in the nation recognized by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) for being ready to handle large scale public health emergencies.

The consortium, which consists of 14 public health agencies in Milwaukee and Waukesha Counties, was selected because it effectively demonstrated that member agencies are prepared to

work collaboratively to handle a variety of public health related emergencies from natural disasters to the threat of bioterrorism. The award was based on criteria that included development of comprehensive preparedness plans and conducting exercises and training.

Carol Wantuch, chair of the consortium and head of Cudahy's Public Health Department, said, "This honor is exceedingly well deserved. It reflects the tremendous effort, dedication, creativity and cooperation that our entire team

of consortium experts demonstrated to ensure that public health professionals across jurisdictional boundaries are ready to assist residents in a time of need."

In the last three years, only 42 local departments or regional partnerships across the nation have received recognition from NACCHO for being ready to handle public health emergencies. Currently, there are approximately 3,000 public health departments operating in the United States. ■



Public Health honors HAM radio operator

Amateur Radio Volunteer Mack Brophy is presented with a Certificate of Recognition from Paul Wittkamp of the Division of Public Health on behalf of Dr. Sheri Johnson, Division of Public Health Administrator and State Health Officer, and Homeland Security Advisor Major General Al Wilkening at the Homeland Security Council meeting held on February 21, 2007. Mack was honored for his participation in assisting the Division of Public Health with their emergency communications planning as well as maintaining weekly emergency communications testing with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Statewide Justice Gateway goes 'Live'

Web-based tool shares investigative data between police, justice agencies; helps track crime, prosecute criminals

Law enforcement and District Attorneys now have more information to effectively track and prosecute criminals and potential terrorists with the launch of the Wisconsin Justice Information Sharing (WIJIS) Gateway. Developed in just 13 months by the Office of Justice Assistance staff, and launched on Feb. 1, the Gateway uses the most advanced and secure technology available to share detailed local criminal justice information with police and investigators statewide.

The Gateway's secure internet connections provide 'pointers' to locally stored information without creating a large and difficult to maintain data warehouse. The pointer approach also allows local chiefs of police and sheriffs to retain complete control of their original records while sharing critical information statewide.

"Crime does not stop at a county or city border, and with

the WIJIS Gateway neither will our investigations," said WIJIS Program Manager Jim Pingel. "With access to more detailed investigative information, police and prosecutors will have the tools they need to help reduce crime, prevent terrorism and keep our communities safe."

Through the WIJIS Gateway, detailed incident reports filed by officers on duty – that hold a wealth of previously inaccessible information – will now be shared between agencies through the Gateway. Currently, the Gateway allows information from 41 law enforcement agencies in Kenosha, La Crosse, Portage, Dane, Winnebago, and Brown Counties to be accessed by authorized law enforcement users throughout the state. Please contact Jim Pingel, James.Pingel@wisconsin.gov for more information on how to connect your agency to the Gateway. ■

REACT'ing Well

The Department of Military Affairs, Office of Justice Assistance, UW College of Engineering and Department of Transportation came together and after four months constructed a building that ultimately collapsed. Was it a failure?

Hardly.

A completed collapsed building and rubble pile are the newest training tools at the Regional Emergency All Climate Training (REACT) Center at Volk Field. The building and rubble pile (nicknamed the Badger Den) offer a wide-range of training opportunities for qualified rescue personnel including fire fighters, law enforcement, EMT's, physicians, engineers and K-9 teams. The REACT Center offers one of the highest levels of rescue training in the country and will be one of only three sites nationwide to have a Raker Breaker – a hydraulic device used by firefighters to test the rakes, or braces, used to support unstable buildings. Inside the rubble pile rests a used Cadillac, camper, pick-up trucks and a school bus to simulate real-life scenarios and rescue situations following a disaster.

“We ran the school bus for nearly a day just to burn off all the old diesel fuel,” said OJA Homeland Security Program Manager Michael Kunesh. “And the Cadillac was in pretty good shape too - that is until we buried it under concrete we took from the Marquette Interchange construction project.”

Training on the collapsed building and rubble pile will begin March 19 and continue through the summer. Participants must have completed the technician level of rope, confined space and trench rescues to be eligible for this training. To get more information on the REACT Center or how to register for upcoming training sessions, contact Kevin Schmitt by e-mailing Kevin.Schmitt@wisconsin.gov. ■



The Badgers Den, a new rubble pile training device at the REACT Center, offers challenging rescue scenarios for trainees. Underneath concrete taken from the Marquette Interchange construction project, cars, trucks and weakened structures provide real-life rescue scenarios.

New preparedness brochure available



Do you have a disaster kit or know what you should do or where you should go during an emergency? The latest brochure from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security can help get you and your family prepared for disasters and emergencies. The brochure has a variety of tips to keep your family safe. It is available at <http://homelandsecurity.wi.gov>.

OJA Report: Nearly 2/3 of first responder radios mutual aid ready

In fewer than 24 months, the State Interoperability Executive Council (SIEC), in partnership with the Office of Justice Assistance, has directed efforts to purchase or reprogram over 23,000 public safety radios to ensure that first responders throughout the state can access mutual-aid frequencies during a crisis.

At a meeting of the Joint Legislative Council's Committee on Disaster Preparedness Planning, OJA Executive Director Dave Steingraber and interoperability specialist Dave Spenner reported that nearly two-thirds of radios in the state are mutual-aid ready.

"Our efforts are continuing and we have not yet achieved full communications interoperability; however, our first responders are better equipped than ever to communicate with one another during a disaster or crisis," reported Steingraber.

The SIEC has also completed a technical plan for statewide interoperability, noted Steingraber, which provides local communities with guidance for future upgrades to communications systems. Though not mandated by the state, the technical plan outlines guidelines that local agencies can follow to ensure future communications interoperability in the state.

Already, over \$8 million has been dedicated to radio interoperability with another \$1.1 million available

this spring. These OJA funds will be available to reprogram older radios or purchase new radios, base stations, MARC repeaters and other communications equipment used to access mutual-aid frequencies and ensure communications interoperability. Awards are made to county emergency management agencies, and police, fire and EMS departments. For information, contact Dave Spenner at David.Spenner@wisconsin.gov. ■

Radio Interoperability By the Numbers

23,400 – Number of radios purchased or reprogrammed by OJA

62 – Percentage of mutual-aid ready radios in Wisconsin

\$1.1 – Millions of grant funds currently available

States test Avian Influenza plans



Wisconsin officials participated in a multi-state exercise on February 5, 2007 focusing on an outbreak of avian influenza. The exercise sponsored by the Multi-State Partnership for Security in Agriculture ran concurrently in 14 other Midwestern states. State-to-state sharing of resources and communications were some of the issues discussed.

State Conference set for March in LaCrosse

The 40th Annual Governor's Conference on Emergency Management and Homeland Security is set for March 28-29, 2007 in LaCrosse, Wisconsin.

Topics at this year's conference include planning for special needs populations, school crisis preparedness and an overview of the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS).

In addition, a special training event will occur prior to the conference on March 27. Those courses that will be offered include mapping technologies for emergency management, EOC operations for disaster recovery, EPCRA planning, and IS-703 NIMS resource management.

The conference will be held at the LaCrosse Center. Conference registration and training materials are available at <http://emergencymanagement.wi.gov>. ■

Lynn Gardiner of People and Paws Search and Rescue and her dog Tasha chat with Brown County Emergency Management Director Cullen Peltier at last year's Governor's Conference on Emergency Management and Homeland Security.



Playing with fire in LaCrosse

In a joint training held at the Campbell Town Hall, firefighters from the Town of Campbell, Onalaska, and La Crescent, MN participated in a propane fire drill. Designed to simulate the actions necessary to mitigate a liquefied petroleum (LP) gas emergency, the drill included representatives from Riverland Community College and TruGas. TruGas provided the propane for the drill. Fire departments in the LaCrosse area routinely engage in joint trainings such as this one to build the skills needed to work effectively in mutual aid scenarios.



Governor Doyle receives Homeland Security update

Members of the Wisconsin Homeland Security Council briefed Governor Jim Doyle on the status of homeland security initiatives during their monthly meeting.

From the left are James Warren, Division of Criminal Investigations; David Collins, Wisconsin State Patrol; Dr. Sheri Johnson, Department of Health and Family Services; David Heinle, Wisconsin Capitol Police; Governor Doyle; Maj. Gen. Al Wilkening, Wisconsin's Homeland Security Advisor; Dave Steingraber, Office of Justice Assistance; Amy Smith, Department of Natural Resources; Johnnie Smith, Wisconsin Emergency Management; and Judy Ziewacz, Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.



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